Aero-Astro still has work

By Jules Mallone

Although the "glamorous" flights of Apollo and Skylab are over, civilal Draper Labs and MIT's Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics are still suffering from a lack of funds or work.

Professor Rene Miller, Head of the Aeronautics and Astronautics Department, and Mr. David Hoag, director of Draper Labs' NASA and Army department said that although NASA and particularly manned flight projects are becoming rare, other contracts are more than taking up the slack.

"The majority of our contracts are no longer NASA's," Hoag said. "During the peak period from 1967-69 we had 500 to 600 people working on NASA projects alone. Now there are only about 100. One important thing to remember, however, is that a lot of those 600 people were working for us on contract and have since gone back to their parent companies.

If you look at the number of people employed by Draper Labs in Aerospace, you'll see that it has stayed pretty near constant."

According to Hoag, Draper Labs will not have to lay off as previously, but will be involved in the upcoming Soyuz-Apollo joint flight and in the space shuttle program. "Industry has become increasingly better qualified to act as the design agency for a project and thus Rockwell will serve in that capacity for the shuttle. We'll be involved in such things as the formulation of the navigational and guidance equations and the mission constraints for the autopilot, however... For the joint flight we are already studying models of the Soyuz so as to see how the attitude control system needs to be adapted. The mission program itself, however, will be the same as we used in Skylab."

Hoag mentioned that the lab had problems finding "high quality" workers. Similarly, Miller said that his department is having trouble supplying the demands of the aerospace labs and companies.

"I think students are a little afraid of the present situation," he said. "They seem to have gotten an image of the aerospace industry as a "fire easy, fry easy" business. In reality there is no place better for someone interested in high technology... It's a demanding field but we are teleworking about the right funds for our graduates."

Miller said he does not see any major role in either the Soyuz-Apollo flight or shuttle program for the MIT department, but that researchers are keeping busy with other projects.

Some of these, he said, included studies on the formation of ice crystals in the upper atmosphere, the propagation of sonic booms through stratified air layers, re-entry problems and the development of some form of short-haul air service in densely populated areas so as to alleviate ground congestion.

"We're really like to be a little more active" than before in order to get the needed funds. "We'd really like to be a little more selective than we have recently. We like to pick things we think require a high degree of technology and also have a good deal of educational value. We also like to be able to do what we think can't be done anywhere else... Of course we'd like a big contract as does everyone but I think we'd better keep the little ones too. After all they're the ones that are going to grow."

Hoag mentioned Draper mentioned Draper Lab was involved in the development of high resolution position finding for the planned Earth Orbital Satellite and the development of a gyro control for space telescopes. Hoag also mentioned that the lab is working on developing adequate controls for the collection of energy by fission or fusion.

Hoag summed up his feelings about the lab's new role in aerospace: "I don't see anything quite as dramatic as the Apollo program in the Lab's near future; and we're worried about that. I think we've adapted nicely but we're still kind of wishful about the good old days of Apollo."

Crime rate stymies forum

By Charlie Shoolian

Crime in America is due to "the society we live in," and there may be no way to stop crime without "changing things we don't want to change."

According to Professor of Government James Q. Wilson of Harvard University, "continuing decrease in the birth rate might be the only way to cut the crime rate that will start in the '80's." Wilson spoke on "Crime: Where Have We Been and Where Are We Going?" at a recent Cambridge Forum Seminar.

Only by limiting the birth rate in the post-World War II baby-boom and the period of prosperity America had during the 1960's, could the crime rate of the late 1960's and early '70's have been cut, Wilson said. "A large part of the crime rate is due to things that we just would not want to change," he said.

Experiments have shown, Wilson said, that increased police forces have little or no effect on the crime rate of an area. Citing "the Kansas City Experiment," Wilson said, that increased police forces have little or no effect on the crime rate of the late 1960's and early '70's have been cut, Wilson said. "A large part of the crime rate is due to things that we just would not want to change," he said.

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